

**EMURCE No: 311 – 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020**  
**Edited this week by: Revd Sarah Gower**

Loved Accepted Noticed Transformed Forgiven Identity Truth Goodness Wholeness.

There are stories in the Bible, which particularly strike a chord with us from when we were children. Especially humorous or dramatic ones with amusing and striking pictures we remember from the Children's Bibles or story books we read. One such, for me, is Zacchaeus, and I have been thinking about him recently. The little, despised man who cheated his neighbours, and who went up a tree to see Jesus. The little man who was still, nevertheless, curious to see this person he had heard so much about. But he knew nobody would want to see him in the crowds, they wouldn't let him get to the front so that he too could see. So he thought he could remain hidden, still going to find out what was happening. And, of course, Jesus noticed to him – actually, not only that, he called him down and said he, Jesus, was coming to his, Zacchaeus' house... much to the outrage and chagrin of the rest of the crowd. There, Jesus spoke to him, and Zacchaeus listened, responded and repented; and his life and the lives of the people of Jericho were changed. Zacchaeus was loved, accepted, noticed, transformed, forgiven, knew identity, truth, goodness and wholeness that day. He could not remain hidden. Jesus knew him and he loved him. And Zacchaeus responded.

We are at the beginning of Lent, an opportunity for us too to listen, to respond and to say sorry to Jesus, our amazing Saviour. My prayer, this Lent, and as we look forward and towards Easter is that each of you, each of us, will know that we too are loved, accepted, noticed, transformed, forgiven, have identity, truth, goodness and wholeness.

So we also discover – the story of Zacchaeus is certainly a great one for children, but it also a story, a life changing story for the whole world.

Sarah Gower, Convenor of Children and Youth Group

#### **MODERATOR'S INDUCTION SERVICE**

Revd Geoffrey Clarke will be inducted as Moderator of East Midlands Synod on Saturday 16th May 2020 at ChristChurch Grantham. The service will be at 3.00pm. Revd Nigel Uden, one of the Assembly Moderators, will preside. Invitations will be sent out shortly.

#### **STEPWISE - Developing your Christian Faith**

Do you want to be inspired, provoked and encouraged in your Christian faith, then, Stepwise is for you. Stepwise is the URC's new discipleship development programme which is part of the *Walking the Way: Living the life of Jesus today*. We never stop developing our faith and learning about how we can make a difference in the world. Stepwise really helps us to do this. The first stream, **Faith Filled Faith** is now available! Visit the Stepwise webpage for more information. If you are interested in taking part, please email the Stepwise team ([stepwise@urc.org.uk](mailto:stepwise@urc.org.uk)) or, here in the East Midlands, either Revd Samuel Silungwe ([s.silungwe@yahoo.com](mailto:s.silungwe@yahoo.com)) or Derek Graham, TDO, ([training@urc5.org.uk](mailto:training@urc5.org.uk)) and we will help you join a local group and start your Stepwise journey.

#### **SYNOD MEETING SATURDAY 21 MARCH 2020**

A quick reminder that our next Synod meeting is on Saturday 21 March commencing at 10.30am at St Andrews with Castle Gate Church Nottingham. Papers will be sent to all Synod representatives and Ministers early next week. Make sure your church is represented. If your representative is unable to attend another person can attend.

**Marlpool URC Theatre Company Present**

**THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC**

An Evening of songs from musicals, film and pop

Marlpool United Reformed Church Community Hall

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020 at 7.30pm - Tickets: £6.00

Available online with no booking fee at [www.ticketsource.co.uk/murctc](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/murctc) or telephone: 01773 712749

**URC CORONAVIRUS PREVENTION ADVICE – Issued 21<sup>st</sup> February 2020**

The United Reformed Church (URC) is offering prevention advice to congregations around the UK on the coronavirus (Covid-19) epidemic to help reduce the risk to people. Covid-19 has been deemed a public health emergency of international concern, however the risk to the UK public has been set at moderate. Coronavirus is part of a large family of viruses that cause a range of illnesses in humans, from the common cold to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). Medical advice has been sought from Thrive Worldwide, which advises the URC on ministerial health issues, so that guidance can be provided to help our churches be confident that they are taking the necessary steps to be as safe as possible.

The guidance covers:

- symptoms which include fever, fatigue, a cough that may progress to pneumonia, causing shortness of breath and breathing difficulties

- how it can be caught and the incubation period
- how to avoid catching it. Thrive Worldwide says: “Churches should already be following best hygiene practices that include advising members who are unwell to stay at home, or those with coughs and sneezes to refrain from handshaking. It is also best practice for churches to have hand sanitisers available for members and visitors to use.”

Full details on the advice issued to help prevent the spread of Covid-19 can be found here:

[https://urc.org.uk/images/News/Coronavirus\\_advice\\_for\\_URC\\_20-02-20.pdf](https://urc.org.uk/images/News/Coronavirus_advice_for_URC_20-02-20.pdf)

This is general advice and was correct at the time of publication. If you feel or become unwell, always seek the advice of your GP or call the NHS Helpline on 111 from landlines or mobiles.

**Tuesday 3rd March** - The URC General Secretary has informed Synods that the clear guidance from Thrive at the moment about forthcoming meetings is to carry on, but to be careful about handwashing, and for people with concerning symptoms to stay at home.

**CHRISTIAN AID PARLIAMENTARY PRAYERS FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE**

Led by former Archbishop of Canterbury, The Rt Revd Dr Rowan Williams On Parliament Square on Wednesday 11th March 2020, 10.30am

Christian Aid works with people around the world who are most vulnerable to climate breakdown; from providing humanitarian relief in emergencies to supporting women to build sustainable businesses using renewable energy. Through our work we know that we can still stop this climate crisis, and we can do it in a way that will also tackle inequality and restore creation.

We are working with partners and allies to bring together the collective power of Christians and churches to build a chain of prayer that spans the world in the run up to the UN Climate Summit taking place in Glasgow in November. We would love it if you could join us to lift your prayers, in solidarity with others, as part of this movement.

Please RSVP to Lydia Mbogoro on [lbogoro@christian-aid.org](mailto:lbogoro@christian-aid.org) who will confirm the exact location of the event and more details of the content nearer the time.

## THE CHANTRY CHOIR – REFLECTIONS

John Stainer—The Crucifixion

Also featuring music by *Mendelssohn, Bach and Elgar*

Saturday, March 14th at 7.30pm

Christ Church, Dumbleton Avenue,

Leicester, LE3 2EG

Cost: £10

## SOME FEEDBACK FROM GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION COMMITTEE

### COMMITMENT FOR LIFE

Commitment for Life, the URC's global justice programme, is a way in which local congregations can participate in actions for justice around the world. The 'look' of Commitment for life has been updated in line with the new URC logo and now features on the resources, posters, giving boxes and communications. We are pleased to report greater engagement with Commitment for Life on the part of local churches. If you are interested in supporting Commitment for Life, and in particular our four partner regions, Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Central America, then visit the URC website ([www.urch.org.uk](http://www.urch.org.uk)) or contact Suzanne Pearson on [suzanne.pearson@urch.org.uk](mailto:suzanne.pearson@urch.org.uk).

### VISIT TO ISRAEL-PALESTINE

A group of 22 people from the URC visited Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (IOPT) in September 2019. The visit has resulted in an enthusiastic, committed fresh cohort of people who between them have already delivered more than 100 presentations across the denomination. *The visit was in response to a 2016 General Assembly resolution mandating Mission Committee 'to enable synods, local churches and individuals to become more aware and to respond with informed prayer, grace and solidarity.'* If your church would like someone from the group to come and talk about the visit, please contact Carole Sired ([carole.sired@urch.org.uk](mailto:carole.sired@urch.org.uk))

### INTERFAITH DAY

Are you interested in interfaith matters but don't know where to start? Do you live in or near Yorkshire? Then why not join the Interfaith Day for local churches, aimed at giving easy first steps in meeting neighbours of other faiths. The day will take place on Saturday 14 March, 11.00 am to 3.30pm near Huddersfield, West Yorkshire. The event is free of charge and will include a free lunch. For more information or to reserve a place, email Carole Sired ([carole.sired@urch.org.uk](mailto:carole.sired@urch.org.uk)).

### GREENBELT 2020

A URC team is planning its contribution to this summer's festival, which will take place over the August Bank Holiday weekend. The theme of the URC's programme will be 'Revolting Christians', linking with Greenbelt's theme 'Wild at Heart'. The planning team is now looking for volunteers. If you are interested, please apply by 23 March. They also need people to craft Christian symbols to be displayed in the URC tent and to nominate Revolting Christians. They would also like to see more URC congregations attending Greenbelt. Help and advice for first timers is available. Contact Samara Andrews on [crcw.admin@urch.org.uk](mailto:crcw.admin@urch.org.uk)

## MAYFLOWER 400 CELEBRATION SERVICE

Members of Synod are warmly invited to a service to celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mayflower Pilgrims' voyage at Gainsborough United Reformed Church at 2pm on Saturday 13 June 2020. The service will be followed by a tea. Gainsborough United Reformed Church was built as a memorial to John Robinson, known as the 'pastor of the Pilgrims.'

Last year the church opened a Mayflower Room which contains an all-age exhibition about the history of the Mayflower Pilgrims and the building of the church. The Mayflower Room will be open on the afternoon of Saturday 13 June. Visitors are also welcome to church Heritage Mornings on the first and third Thursday mornings of every month, 10am-11.30am.

Places for the Celebration Service are limited. Please e-mail or phone Janet Gilbert:

[mj\\_gilbert@talktalk.net](mailto:mj_gilbert@talktalk.net), Tel. 01427 610358 to book your place. If you would like to arrange a group visit to the Mayflower Room outside Heritage Mornings, please contact Susan Bee by e-mail [bee.susan@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bee.susan@yahoo.co.uk) or phone 01427 811258.

## JOB OPPORTUNITIES – ARTHUR RANK CENTRE

### CHARITABLE TRUSTS AND CORPORATE FUNDRAISER and INDIVIDUAL GIVING AND SUPPORTER ENGAGEMENT FUNDRAISER

Both posts - 18 hours a week, £k 30-32 pro rata, CV8 – Stoneleigh Park

We are a national charity looking for a fundraisers with a proven track record to join our small, friendly team. If we are to continue our work training, resourcing, and advocating for rural Christians, we must be financially sustainable. We love building relationships with people all over the UK, and we need your help with our work.

For a full description and more information visit: <https://arthurrankcentre.org.uk/VACANCY-CHARITABLE-TRUSTS-AND-CORPORATE-FUNDRAISER/>

And

<https://arthurrankcentre.org.uk/VACANCY-INDIVIDUAL-GIVING-AND-SUPPORTER-ENGAGEMENT-FUNDRAISER/>

**For both vacancies** - If you are looking for a supportive, encouraging workplace with excellent coffee, and want to contribute creatively to a changing organisation, please contact Alison Selwood [alison.selwood@arthurrankcentre.org.uk](mailto:alison.selwood@arthurrankcentre.org.uk) for an information pack and application form. The closing date is Monday 9 March at 12noon. The interviews will be 1 or 2 April 2020.



### THE BOOTS ORCHESTRA

At Beeston Methodist Church, Chilwell Road on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2020 at 7.30pm

The programme includes: Schubert – Symphony no.6 in C

Mendelssohn Overture – The Hebrides (Fingal’s Cave)

Tickets in aid of HOPE Nottingham: £6.50 for adults, £5 for children under 16 years

Interval refreshments are included

Contact: [tony.richmond@hopenottingham.org.uk](mailto:tony.richmond@hopenottingham.org.uk) for details

### 2020 YEAR BOOKS AND PRAYER HANDBOOKS

The URC bookshop has a few A4 (large print) prayer handbooks and 2020 diaries available for free to any churches, groups or committees that can meaningfully give them away. For example, to give to church members, to engage with users of church buildings, to give to care home residents, community groups and so on. If you would like to request copies please contact Andy Jackson at Church House: [andy.jackson@urc.org.uk](mailto:andy.jackson@urc.org.uk)

**AND FINALLY:** - This E letter is sent on behalf of The URC East Midlands Synod, 1 Edwards Lane, Sherwood, Nottingham, NG5 3AA. Telephone: 0115 9609241

Email address for E-Letter Editor: [trainingpa@urc5.org.uk](mailto:trainingpa@urc5.org.uk)

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